Civil Engineering Technology & GIS
Advisory Committee Meeting
Friday, May 3, 2013
11:30 – 1:00
Location: C109

Minutes

Attendance: Stephen Druschel, Dan Sarff, Seth Greenwood, Dan Stueber, Dan Flatgard, Jay Stencel, Suzanne Nordblom, Chad Fowlds, Jim Tatge, Todd Weins, Steve Koehler, Cody Meyer, David Richardson, Kathy Drummer
Absent: Jeff Johnson, Peter Blethen, TJ Thill, Ryan Thilges, Monde Schwartz, Chuck Brandel

Meeting started at 11:45

Dan Flatgard began the meeting with introductions, followed by a graduation update – 11 graduates this year, all but two are employed full time. Those unemployed are planning a move out of the area, one student moving to Colorado, one to the twin cities. Also, two graduates will be continuing in their studies of Land Surveying at St Cloud State this fall.

The total number of students beginning the program this year was 15.

Jay Stencel indicated the need for marketing. He has attended career days and did some high school presentations. Schools prefer that SCC not come in to market the program. Dan Flatgard explained that most current students found out about the program online or from a friend. Some past marketing schemes have been online with web pop ups, radio ads, and video clips in movie theaters ads.

Suzanne Nordblom indicated that the numbers are going down throughout the MNSCU system. All programs are seeing a numbers decline and it seems that not as many students out there that are interested in the programs at SCC. SCC is 200 students down from fall, down 300 from last year, and are expecting enrollment to be down this fall also. This could be just cyclical, some programs down, yet Mechatronics is up in numbers. She questioned the job market for Civil Technicians. Dan Flatgard indicated that there were more openings this year for Civil Technicians than other years since he has been at SCC. Suzanne shared that SCC will be getting a new marketing director which may help our marketing efforts and bring in new ideas and summer is still a strong time to see an increase in student numbers.

Stephen Druschel asked what is the program’s marketing plan. Jay Stencel shared that the program does not have a formal plan, and it relies on the college for outreach areas. Suzanne summarized the new initiative for marketing that has organized staff where each program has a specific staff person assigned to develop retention plans and recruitment ideas. The representative for the Civil Tech program is Jeannie Ender and she has 14 programs that she is working with. Suzanne shared that this is
a good direction for the school. Dan Flatgard added that during the periods where there was grant money to be applied to the program, marketing was a priority. Currently, funds for marketing are less available.

Dan Flatgard reviewed the upcoming summer camps. To try and beat the heat, the GIS camp, geared toward middle school ages, will be held in June this year. There will be no Faribault camps due to campus construction. Suzanne will also be holding a 1-day STEM Girls camp focusing on the building design process and construction. Dan Flatgard brought up the idea of working towards implementing a GIS class in middle schools, maybe a possibility for Dakota Meadows. Also, ESRI – provides funds to map high school property and buildings which could be a possible extracurricular activity to offer the middle school. The ‘Mapping My World’ program is geared toward high school students.

Jay Stencel shared on the upcoming guitar camp for older students in grades 9-11, which will include building a solid body guitar in 6 days.

Dan Flatgard opened the discussion of the 60/120 credit cap / waiver – addressing this again with student representation present. In our last meeting, most all agreed to go forward with the waiver, but, if staying with 70, we must document why the need to remain at 70 credits. Most other similar programs in the state are applying for the waiver. They were not in favor of the group waiver due to the many variables between other Civil Tech Programs. The option to offer a Diploma was brought up. This removes all but 6 liberal arts credits. After discussing the differences between an AAS Degree and a Diploma, the majority of employers look for the AAS Degree, but if the applicant can demonstrate knowledge, they may entertain a diploma vs. AAS. Dan Flatgard summarized the other MN programs and all are applying for the waiver. The primary reason for MNSCU in reducing the credit load of the program is to reduce cost for students. Stephen Druschel added that MSU had discounted credits but still teach a 2 credit with the 3 credit load, which can be felt.

Dan Sarff brought up that at the last meeting, the board agreed to stay at 70 credits, but more discussion centered around how to justify the 70 credits vs. dropping the program credit number. Steve Koehler, Dan Sarff, and Todd Weins stressed the importance to keep the program math strong and the experience gained in materials testing. An outline of what the program would look like at 60 credits was discussed. Jay Stencel indicated the option to require Math 130 – PreCalc and leave it up to the student to get the required prerequisites complete. Also, it was discussed that a 60 credit program may be easier to market and could make it more viable for a student to complete the GIS Certificate instead of the additional liberal arts credits.

Suzanne added that most of the programs she oversees are applying for the waiver, yet some are at 60 already, and some are cutting back. She is not in favor of cutting back, students need the education there. Jay Stencel showed that on the 60 credit program outline, we are taking away credits but maintaining contact time by adding lab credits, therefore, curriculum would be staying the same.

David Richardson added that he has a 4 year degree already so he did not have to take most of the liberal arts. At 60 credits, students may opt to finish the GIS certificate. Now, most students finish in 5 semesters, so many don’t want the extra semester to finish the GIS certificate. It may be that with a 60
credit program, a student would have more qualifications with the GIS certificate than with a 70 credit program.

Dan Flatgard agreed that most students take more than 4 semesters due to low accuplacar scores in the area of math, and that 2.5 semesters is more realistic. Many would like to take GIS, but are overloaded with the program requirements.

Cody Meyer agreed that at 60 credits, more students would be open to finish the GIS Certificate and that trigonometry and speech is taken in high school. He asked the board if a GIS Certificate would be a benefit in their areas of employment. Chad Fowlds suggested that by going to 60 credits, it would please legislature, but it may benefit us where the students will be more apt to take the extra GIS credits that would help in our industry areas. Chad suggested that if the board wants more GIS, then go 60 credits, if not, leave the program at 70.

The option of the diploma was discussed. Dan Flatgard showed that a diploma would eliminate the higher math option and teach civil math in its place and requires only 6 liberal arts credits. The student who plans to go on to a 4 year program would need to follow a higher level math tract. Dan Sarff agreed that the program must have math and trig, and that tech com and public speaking are not as important.

Dan Flatgard pointed out that in the 60 credit option, the program could require English Comp and PreCalc, then for the remaining 7 liberal arts credits, the student may choose from 3 MNSCU goal areas. This would allow for other interests, such as DNR employment, the student may choose to take a biology class. He also indicated that the decision to waive or cut to 60 credits must be made before the meetings end. Since this subject has come up twice in the last few years, the question of will it come up again was discussed. Again, the credit assignments were discussed. A 5 credit class may be cut to 4 credits but the amount of contact time will remain nearly the same by assigning more lab credits than lecture credits. Dan Sarff stated that if it will be harder to convince why we are at 70 that would make the push to 60 easier. With a 60 credit program, retention and recruitment becomes even more important.

Chad Fowlds made a motion to go with the 60 credit option. Steve Koehler agreed as long as Math 130 (PreCalc) is a required class. The motion was made to cut the program to 60 credits with Pre Calc being a requirement. All members were in favor of cutting the program to 60 credits.

Suzanne introduced the program review that will be taking place next year. It will include people from other industries and colleges that will review the program, interview the dean, president, students, and faculty about the program. Kathy and Dan will be working on the statistics and outcomes for all courses, enrollment, graduation rates, and other data over last 5 years, analyzing it, getting recommendations from committee members, present the findings, and make a response plan over the summer to be implemented the following fall.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:05 p.m.